



State of Arizona  
Department of Education  
Office of John Huppenthal  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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November 3, 2014

Dear teachers and members of education community,

You started this school year with many unknowns surrounding Arizona's statewide assessment. I want to thank you for your patience and for your unending dedication in ensuring Arizona's students are on track to be successful in their future endeavors. Every day your efforts improve the lives of students and enhance their academic achievement. Thank you.

Today, I am happy to give you some answers to your many questions. This morning in continuing to ensure all Arizona children have the opportunity to succeed, the Arizona State Board of Education (Board) has announced a new assessment to replace the AIMS Reading, Writing, and Mathematics tests beginning spring 2015. The Board voted and approved that American Institutes for Research (AIR) will provide Arizona's New Assessment, AzMERIT - Arizona's Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching.

Some features of AIR include:

- **Better able to measure students' readiness for the future**

The exams will offer computer-based innovative item types that better measure students' mastery of the standards including problem solving and critical thinking skills. Equated paper-based exams will be available for schools not ready for computer-based testing. Student scores will be comparable regardless of the testing format.

- **More meaningful reporting**

Reports will identify students' areas of strength and weakness. AzMERIT results will be comparable to results in Utah, Florida, and the Smarter Balanced states.

- **Least Disruptive**

The AzMERIT testing window and times are similar to AIMS testing window and times. Students will participate in testing for about 7 hours across multiple days during an April testing window.

Arizona public school students in Grades 3 through high school will take AzMERIT in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students in Grades 4, 8, and high school will still take the AIMS Science test.

Students in Grades 3 through 8 will take AzMERIT in English Language Arts and Mathematics at their grade level. Students taking high school level English Language Arts and Mathematics will take AzMERIT End-of-Course assessments that will test their proficiency in these subjects near the end of the course.



High school students graduating after December 31, 2016 will no longer be required to pass the AIMS test to graduate high school. Students will not be required to pass the End-of-Course tests for graduation, but they must still earn the minimum number of English and Mathematics credits in order to graduate.

ADE is currently in discussions with AIR and will share more details about the test, including testing windows and timelines in the coming days and weeks.

Accountability measures related to AzMERIT, including A-F letter grades, are still being discussed. Together ADE and the Board will actively inform the education community once decisions have been made.

ADE is dedicated to providing the support necessary for a successful administration of AzMERIT, and ADE will work diligently to provide you information throughout this transition. For more information regarding the selection and RFP process, please visit the [State Board of Education's website](#). For more information on the administration of the new statewide assessment, please visit ADE's website at [www.azed.gov/AzMERIT](http://www.azed.gov/AzMERIT).

Sincerely,

Jennifer Johnson, Ed.D.

Deputy Superintendent of Programs and Policy  
Arizona Department of Education

